REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

The purpose of this outreach initiative is to ensure that health professionals, their patients and the general public are connected to the health information resources they need to make informed health care decisions. This solicitation will focus on projects designed to improve access to electronic health information for such groups and organizations as consumers, the underserved and minority health care professionals, public health workers, public libraries, and community-based and faith-based organizations.

Outreach can take various forms depending on the needs of the target audience: promoting awareness of relevant health information resources at the regional, state, and local level through presentations, demonstrations, and exhibits; linking individuals and organizations with a National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM) member for backup assistance in locating hard to find information; obtaining the full text of journal articles; teaching how to search the Internet for reliable and authoritative health information; demonstrating and teaching the use of PubMed, MedlinePlus, *ClinicalTrials.gov*, PHpartners.org, additional NLM databases, and other sources to obtain health information; and developing links to local, state and regional health-related information to enhance what is available in MedlinePlus for consumers.

ELIGIBILITY

Full and Affiliate members of the NN/LM are eligible to apply. Applications may cover groups of institutions. A single, lead institution, which must be an NN/LM member, may apply on behalf of the group. Health sciences libraries, health information resource centers, public libraries, state organizations, and public health departments which provide health information services are eligible for Network membership. See Attachment 1 or the membership fact sheet at http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/factsheets/nnlmem.html for information about becoming an NN/LM member.

FUNDING

The lead institution will subcontract to NN/LM Southeastern/Atlantic Region with responsibility for the planning, direction, and execution of the proposed project. For a single institution, support is available up to $10,000; a collaborative project conducted by two or more institutions may receive up to $40,000. These amounts are inclusive of all indirect costs. *Please note that all awards are made as cost reimbursement subcontracts.* The proposed projects may target individuals and organizations providing health information to the public and health professionals, as well as targeting the public directly.

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

Up to eighteen (18) months from date of the award.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

June 4, 2004.

CONTACT

For membership information or for additional information on the RFP, please call **1-800-338-7657.**

Please send proposals to:

Janice Kelly, Executive Director
NN/LM Southeastern/Atlantic Region
University of Maryland HS/HSL
601 West Lombard Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-1512

SEE ATTACHED DOCUMENTS

Attachment 1 --NN/LM Membership Information
Attachment 2 -- Mandatory Criteria Checklist
Attachment 3 -- Budget Form

ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

I.   STATEMENT OF WORK

A. OBJECTIVES

Background

For more than 30 years the National Library of Medicine's bibliographic database, MEDLINE, has aided health professionals in keeping up with new developments in their field.   The introduction in 1997 of free MEDLINE searching on the Internet through PubMed, which provides access to NLM's bibliographic databases, extended this tool to a much wider audience. Since that time, public interest in MEDLINE has skyrocketed. The number of MEDLINE searches has increased from 7 million a year in 1997 to more than 400 million in 2001. Approximately one-third of these searches are being done by the general public.

NLM's consumer health focus led to the development of MedlinePlus, an easy-to-understand resource for the public. MedlinePlus includes links to self-help groups, NIH consumer health information, clearinghouses, health-related organizations, list of libraries that provide health information to consumers, and clinical trials. MedlinePlus also provides access to extensive information on over 650 specific diseases and conditions. The site is being continuously expanded to include comprehensive information on hundreds of diseases and conditions. Designed to assist the public and health professionals in locating appropriate, authoritative health information, MedlinePlus is a selected list of quality sources, not a list of every web page on health. A Spanish version of MedlinePlus has been available since September 2002.

The eight Regional Medical Libraries (RMLs), through contracts with the National Library of Medicine, provide outreach to communities in their region. Their outreach activities include training in MedlinePlus and other NLM databases. The RMLs have also developed training and partnership resources targeted towards public libraries and public health departments. These resources are available to organizations working with public libraries and public health departments. Organizations awarded the project will work as a subcontractor to ----Region#-.
This region covers the following states: Alabama, District of Columbia, Georgia, Florida, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and US Virgin Islands. A listing of the other Regional Medical Libraries and their associated states can be found at
http://nnlm.gov/about/.

Scope

NLM, through the National Network of Libraries of Medicine, is especially interested in forming multitype library partnerships with the goal of improving access to health information through a variety of mechanisms. Subcontracts will be competitively awarded to NN/LM member libraries which have established or plan to establish relationships with local public libraries, school libraries, state library organizations, health information resource centers, public health departments, and/or community-based and faith-based organizations, in order to assess information needs of the public and health professionals, and plan and propose an appropriate outreach program to meet those needs. Subcontracts will also be awarded to individual institutions to expand the level of health information services they currently provide to include new individuals and groups beyond their own institution.

The projects proposed may include ideas for enhancing health information resources of the National Library of Medicine without duplicating NLM's resources or databases. Applicants should contact their RML if they are uncertain about their proposed idea.

Proposed projects should include several of the following elements. Additional creative ideas for improving access to health information are also encouraged.

(a) Partnerships

Developing or strengthening partnerships and connections among NN/LM libraries and other organizations (public, school, and/or state libraries; voluntary health agencies; community organizations; health information resource centers, public health departments, etc.) that provide health information. Partnering organizations should take an active role in working towards accomplishment of project goals. These partnerships may include arrangements for backup reference service, consultation on researching difficult questions, building web-based community health information sites, provision of document delivery, advice on collection development, training, assistance in searching PubMed and other cooperative activities.

(b) Training

Training staff of targeted organizations to search NLM's databases including PubMed, *ClinicalTrials.gov*, MedlinePlus, Tox Town, PHpartners.org, etc.;

Training staff of targeted organizations to identify, access, retrieve, evaluate, and use relevant print and electronic health information resources and services;

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Training staff of targeted organizations to provide health information services to consumers and health professionals, including conducting the reference interview, understanding basic medical terminology, and obtaining full text of articles not available in their collection;

Training staff of targeted organizations to train others to provide health information services and/or to find and evaluate health information on the Internet;

Training groups of consumers and health professionals to locate good sources of health information on the Internet.

(c) Enhanced Access

Developing enhanced access to PubMed, MedlinePlus, ClinicalTrials.gov, and other health information resources using the latest technology. This may include building local web pages and creating links to regional, state and local consumer health information resources or developing other innovative programs and services through the use of technology.

(d) Publicity and Promotion

Publicizing NLM and NN/LM products and services, as well as other appropriate health information resources and services;

Exhibiting, demonstrating or making presentations at meetings of appropriate groups to reach the public and health professionals or organizations providing them with health information.

B. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The bidder(s) shall prepare and submit the following reports:

Quarterly Reports

Quarterly reports must include a brief 2-3 page narrative description of the activities during the reporting period, and the activities planned for the next reporting period. At a minimum, the report will include:

- Progress toward major objectives of the project
- Problems encountered and measures taken to resolve them
- Suggestions for modifications to the project
- Outreach reporting form(s)
- Exhibit information form(s) (if applicable)

Quarterly reports are due 15 days after the close of each quarter.

Final Report

The final report must include a narrative summary of project accomplishments; sites where training was done and a description of training sites; description of target audience; list of exhibits, if applicable; approaches and interventions used; project evaluation results; observations on problems or barriers encountered; impact of the project; and recommendations for improvements, alternative methods, insights, etc. In addition, a graphical compilation of web site statistics, classes and demonstrations conducted of NLM databases, and meetings attended, must be provided. **A final report shall be submitted 30 days from the last day of the performance period.**

The quarterly reports and final report must be submitted in hard copy as well as in electronic format as Microsoft Word or HTML documents.

C. DELIVERABLES

In addition to the aforementioned REPORTING REQUIREMENTS, the bidder shall provide, in electronic format (whether in ASCII, HTML, PDF, or other document formats), any materials developed or produced with project funds. In accepting the award, the bidder gives permission for use of such materials by the NLM and NN/LM. The bidder may also be asked to provide information to the RML or to NLM, such as IP addresses, which will be used to track usage of MedlinePlus, PubMed or *ClinicalTrials.gov* by institutions participating in the project. Information on training materials developed under this contract should also be submitted to the National Training Center and Clearinghouse (NTCC) (http://nnlm.gov/train/suggest.html).

II. TECHNICAL PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals will be accepted from Full and Affiliate Network members. A detailed plan must be submitted indicating how the statement of work will be implemented. All elements outlined in the STATEMENT OF WORK must be addressed in as much detail as necessary to demonstrate a clear understanding of the work being undertaken.

Please prepare your TECHNICAL PROPOSAL according to the following outline:

A. Cover Sheet

Include name of the lead institution and the name, address, voice and fax numbers, and email address of the Principal Investigator(s).

B. Checklist of Mandatory Qualification Criteria

Please fill out the checklist included in this package as Attachment 2.

C. Project Narrative

The Project Narrative shall discuss how the project will accomplish the technical requirements and specific tasks required to implement the STATEMENT OF WORK. Bidders must include information sufficient for reviewers to evaluate the proposal based on the evaluation criteria (See Section IV Evaluation of Proposals). The project narrative must include technical requirements and specific tasks. Project descriptions must be succinct in addressing the following:

1. **Abstract**

   The abstract must include a brief description of:

          (a) the purpose;
          (b) target groups and partners;
          (c) methods, anticipated outcomes, and evaluation activities.

2. **Introduction and Background**

   Provide a brief introduction to the planned project and the organizations that will be involved with the project, incorporating any relevant background information.

3. **Identification and Description of Target Population and Geographic Area Covered**

   Identify the specific libraries and organizations that will participate in the program, both those carrying out the project and those receiving the services. For each organization participating in the project, including any branches and satellite locations, information must be provided on:

   a. the demographics of the populations served;
   b. geographic areas covered;
   c. connectivity to the Internet;
   d. the number of workstations available for public access to the Internet;
   e. the number of workstations available for staff access to the Internet;
   f. the health information resources currently available;
   g. the health information services currently provided.

4. **Identification of Need**

   For the target audience(s) specified in the proposal, provide data on the need for the proposed outreach activity, based on previously published information or on data previously collected by the bidder as part of a needs assessment.

5. **Project Objectives**

   State the objectives to be achieved. Indicate the rationale for the plan and relationship to comparable work elsewhere, if known. Review pertinent work

already published and relate it to the proposed approach. Explain how the proposed project will improve access to health information.

6. **Methodology**

Relate the methodology to the stated objectives so that each objective has an equivalent methodology. Provide a detailed plan of the outreach services and methods that will be used during the course of the project, and include expected outcomes. Detail how the project will be implemented, highlighting specific tasks that will be performed and who will perform them. Provide an implementation schedule for all activities to be undertaken during the project.

7. **Evaluation Plan**

Evaluation methodologies must be described in full. The evaluation plan should be closely tied to the statement of work and the project goals and objectives. The evaluation should also seek to identify the general health information needs and behaviors of the public and health professionals as observed during the project, and report the usefulness of the information products/services used, especially MedlinePlus, PubMed, and ClinicalTrials.gov. Anecdotal summaries will be acceptable as appendices to the overall evaluation. Recommendations for future services/products geared toward the targeted community and identification of needs that could not be met, should also be included. The bidder is encouraged to refer to and utilize Measuring the Difference: Guide to Planning and Evaluating Health Information Outreach (http://nnlm.gov/evaluation/guide) developed by the NN/LM Pacific Northwest Region in the evaluation plan of the project.

8. **Publicity/Promotion**

Provide a detailed plan for promoting the project to the targeted community or communities. Projects that develop web sites are encouraged to register with Internet search engines as a means of promoting the site to the community.

9. **Personnel**

Identify all project personnel. Include a narrative summary of qualifications as they relate to the statement of work and project responsibilities. Evidence of the Principal Investigator(s) ability to manage a project of similar scope should be provided. A tabular summary of estimated hours of project work and percentage of total hours worked should be provided for all personnel. Include curriculum vitae for all proposed personnel.

If a position is new and will not be filled by current staff, please provide a detailed job description and minimum qualifications for the position.

Preference will be given to organizations that have prior experience working with the target group or those willing to take steps to obtain such experience prior to carrying out the project.

10. **Facilities/Institutional Support**

Describe the bidding institution, its resources and services, as it pertains to the statement of work. Describe the services that will be provided to project participants. Include a letter of commitment from the bidder's institutional administration, and letters of commitment from the administration of all libraries and agencies involved in or targeted in the project. Include a description of how this project will build on other initiatives to improve public access to the Internet, if applicable.

11. **Continuation of Activities After Project Completion**

Describe intent to continue project services to targeted community after completion of the project. Which services will be continued and how will they be funded? Describe any plans for sharing results of the project with participants.

12. **Other NLM or NN/LM Support**

Information on grants/contracts/competitive purchase orders with the National Library of Medicine or the NN/LM funded previously, are currently active, pending review or funding, or being prepared for submission, must be provided.

13. **Number of Copies**

Bidder should submit one original and 3 copies of the proposal. An electronic version (Microsoft Word) must also be e-mailed to (RML).

III. COST PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Bidder shall submit a detailed budget providing a breakdown and written justification for the costs included in each expenditure category. The breakdown should include items funded through the project, in-kind contributions and funding from any other sources if applicable. Funds may be requested for the following (these are examples only and are not meant to be all-inclusive):

- salaries of project personnel
- rental or purchase of equipment and software to support training and demonstration activities or to improve access to health information
- travel necessary to support the project
- developing, producing, and distributing promotional materials
- other costs

Please Note:

Funds requested to develop print collections of health materials or to purchase access to any commercial electronic health information product may not exceed 5% of the total amount of the project budget.

Costs related to providing food or purchasing furniture may not be requested in the budget.

Bidders are strongly encouraged to not include IDCs or consider a reduced IDC since these are education and training projects. Please note that this is a cost reimbursement subcontract.

Please prepare your COST PROPOSAL according to the following outline:

A. Cover Sheet

Include name of the lead institution and the name, address, voice and fax numbers, and email address of the Principal Investigator(s).

B. Budget Form

Sample budget form provided (Attachment 3).

C. Budget Narrative

Provide a detailed cost breakdown and justification for each of the categories listed below.

1. Personnel

Include professional and support personnel for the project.

2. Equipment

Include rental or purchase of equipment and software to support the project.

3. Communications

Include telephone, postage, parcel and other delivery services and communication line charges.

4. Reproduction

Include costs for printing/photocopying of project related materials.

5. Other Costs

Include any items which do not fit into any other line item, i.e. travel, exhibit, or evaluation costs. Please provide a breakdown of what has been included under Other Costs.

IV. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

A. General

In the selection of the awardee(s) for this acquisition, primary consideration will be given to the evaluation of technical proposals rather than cost or price. The evaluation will be based on the demonstrated capabilities of the prospective bidders in relation to the needs of the project as set forth in the Statement of Work. The merits of each proposal will be carefully evaluated, based on responsiveness to the RFP and the thoroughness and feasibility of the technical approach proposed. Bidders must submit information sufficient to evaluate their proposals based on the criteria listed below.

B. Mandatory Qualification Criteria

The mandatory qualification criteria establish conditions that must be met in order for the proposal to be considered. Please complete the checklist **(Attachment 2)** indicating that these mandatory criteria are met.

C. Technical Evaluation Criteria

The technical evaluation criteria are listed in the order of relative importance with points assigned for evaluation purposes. **PROPOSALS WILL BE SCORED AGAINST THESE CRITERIA, SO PLEASE BE CERTAIN THAT ALL CRITERIA HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED.**

Criterion 1
Technical Approach: **50 Points**

The logic and feasibility of the technical approach to reaching the target group or community.

The types of outreach services provided for the target population with consideration given to the appropriateness, creativity and cost effectiveness of the methods proposed.

Inclusions of a timeline or implementation schedule for major events and activities.

Plans for evaluating the success of the approach to meeting the information needs of the target group.

Inclusion of partnerships with other libraries and organizations to improve the target population's access to health information.

Statement or plan to continue support of services beyond the project period.

The extent to which the proposed project adds value to other initiatives to improve the target population's access to the Internet.

Criterion 2
Community Targeted: 30 Points

Information on the target population should be provided. Estimates of the potential population and the portion expected to be reached should be included.

Target group or population is described and the actual or perceived need for the proposed program is discussed. Estimation of the program's potential impact on future information services to this group or population is discussed.

Criterion 3
Project Support: 20 Points

Experience of the proposed personnel in developing and conducting promotional and/or training programs in health information for patients, the public or health professionals. Preference will be given to bidders with prior experience/knowledge of the target group and experience in providing PubMed and Internet training. If the bidder has no prior experience in developing and conducting related programs, indication should be provided concerning the steps that will be taken to obtain adequate background or experience prior to carrying out the project.

Evidence of institutional facilities and resources adequate to support the proposed program.

Letter of commitment from bidder's institutional administration, and letters of commitment from administrations of all agencies involved or targeted in the project.

TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE: 100

NN/LM MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

The National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM), the first comprehensive national library network, began in 1967. Under the leadership of the National Library of Medicine and through the participation of medical libraries and other information resources throughout the nation, it has developed into a well-organized and effective network for meeting the information needs of the nation's health professionals and of the general public.

The NN/LM (formerly the Regional Medical Library Network) has been in existence longer than any other library network, however a mechanism had not been established to formally recognize participating institutions until 1988. Although formal recognition is now being given to these participants, it is acknowledged that many other organizations and institutions are part of and contribute to the success of the Network.

DEFINITION OF THE NATIONAL NETWORK OF LIBRARIES OF MEDICINE

The Medical Library Assistance Act of 1965 (P.L. 89-291) established a program of grants and contracts to assist in developing the services of medical libraries and facilitating the dissemination and utilization of information related to health sciences. Included in the original law and all subsequent amendments was a program to assist the development of a national system of Regional Medical Libraries (RMLs).

The mission of the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM) is to advance the progress of medicine and improve the public health by providing all U.S. health professionals equal access to biomedical information and by improving the public's access to information to enable them to make informed decisions about their health. The program is coordinated by the National Library of Medicine and carried out through a nationwide network of health sciences libraries and information centers.

Stated goals for the NN/LM are:

a) To develop collaborations with NN/LM members to improve access to and sharing of biomedical information resources throughout the nation.

b) To promote awareness of and access to biomedical information resources for health professionals and the public.

c) To develop, promote, and improve access to electronic health information resources by Network member libraries, health professionals, and organizations providing health information to the public.

DEFINITION OF A NETWORK MEMBER

There are two (2) categories of membership within the NN/LM: **Full Member** and **Affiliate Member.**

A Full member can be any health sciences library or health-related information center, institution, or organization that: (1) is regularly staffed; (2) has an Internet connection; (3) has its own collection of health sciences materials (books, journals, audiovisuals, electronic databases); (4) provides information services to health professionals and/or the general public.

"Information services" must include DOCLINE participation, and should include the following:
(1) answering or referring reference questions; and (2) performing information searches.

Members are encouraged to provide Loansome Doc service to their own users and/or to unaffiliated users.

An Affiliate member is a library, information/resource center or organization that is called on for health information by its users, but which does not meet all of the criteria for Full member participation. An Affiliate member might form a cooperative relationship with a Full member, for example, for reference assistance or document delivery.

PREREQUISITES FOR INCLUSION AS A NETWORK MEMBER

Each Full and Affiliate member institution, regardless of category, must agree to make the following contributions:

1. Designate an individual as the local contact person for Network information/communications.

2. Be listed in the national registry of Network members. National registry information is available online through the DOCUSER file and through the NN/LM Members database.

3. Provide basic information on collections and services to NLM and to their Regional Medical Library (RML) by keeping their DOCUSER record up-to-date.

BENEFITS RECEIVED BY NETWORK MEMBERS

Each Full member *and* Affiliate member will receive:

a. A certificate, which names the institution as a recognized member of the NN/LM.

b. An invitation, on a periodic basis, to provide input to its RML on the region's program and services, and invitations to apply for various funding opportunities.

c. Access to interlibrary loan services available to the Network.

d. Special mailings of NLM posters, brochures, and other publications.

e. An opportunity for librarians from their institutions to be considered for service on the RML's Regional Advisory Committee.

f. Enrollment in the regional electronic discussion list.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For membership information or for additional information on the RFP, please call 1-800-338-7657.

CHECKLIST OF MANDATORY QUALIFICATION CRITERIA FOR THE LEAD INSTITUTION (RFP: Access to Electronic Health Information 2004)

Single Institution_____   **OR**   **Multi Institutions_____**

Lead Institution Name: _____

Library's LIBID (if applicable):_____

Please fill in or check the appropriate answer to each of the following statements.

1. **The institution is an NN/LM member.**

   YES _____ NO_____

2. **The institution:**

   (a)   **is a DOCLINE participant**

          YES _____ NO_____   **OR**

   (b)   **has submitted an application to become a DOCLINE participant**

          YES _____ NO_____   **OR**

   (c)   **is a Loansome Doc participant in order to provide document delivery service to the targeted population for the duration of the project.**

          YES _____ NO_____

3. **The total amount being requested does not exceed:**

   a)   **$10,000 (including indirect cost) for a Single Institution**

          YES _____ NO_____   **OR**

   b)   **$40,000 (including indirect cost) for a Group of Institutions**

          YES _____ NO_____

Budget

Submitted by:_____

Date Submitted: _____

Period Covered: _____

EXPENDITURE CATEGORY	AMOUNT
Personnel	
Equipment	
Supplies	
Communications	
Reproduction	
Other Costs	
TOTAL	